



Ever-popular parade
unites Montrealers

Description

Montreal celebrates its 196th St. Patrick's Day parade

By **Patricia Dumais**

Photography by **James St Laurent**

One of the longest-running and largest St. Patrick's Day parades in North America occurs each year in Montreal, whose city flag includes a shamrock in its lower-right quadrant. The parade has been held yearly without interruption since 1824 and the **United Irish Societies of Montreal** has been organizing it since 1929. St. Patrick's Day itself, however, has been celebrated in Montreal since as far back as 1759 by Irish soldiers in the Montreal Garrison following the British conquest of New France.

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year marked the parade's 196th year and it occurred on Sunday, March 17, the very day St. Patrick's is celebrated! After a year going in the reverse direction from usual on a different street (de Maisonneuve Blvd.), the parade returned to Ste-Catherine Street. But because of construction, the route was shorter, ending at Metcalfe Street, just east of the official reviewing stand at Peel Street.

The procession kicked off at noon at the corner of Ste. Catherine and Fort streets. Despite looking like springtime, temperatures felt as low as -13°C in the afternoon but that didn't stop thousands of spectators from flocking to Ste. Catherine Street to view over 30 floats and 2,500 participants, included 17 bands from Quebec and Ontario. Irish dancing, music and a wee bit of booze helped to keep the cold at bay!

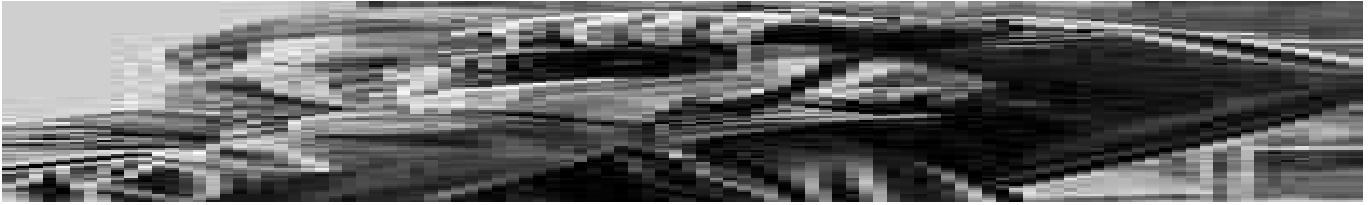
This ever-popular parade is not just for those who are Irish or of Irish ancestry. It attracts people of all ages and ethnicities – a perfect excuse for all of us to get together and have some fun!

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James St Laurent – My work is all about the idea – to communicate through images that convey an emotive context and engage the viewer by presenting a visual paradox. Different types of subjects and genres require different approaches, but the end result is still a compelling image that captures your attention. Despite having had a camera early on, I found myself in a career as a stage set and lighting designer, then accidentally stumbled and fell back into photography. Since then I have shot a variety of genres, ranging from fashion to travel to portraits to concerts, and exhibited in galleries in both group and solo shows. There are photographs everywhere – the problem is to find the interesting images or those that no one else sees. The obvious is easy – the unique takes a little more time. jamesstlaurent.com



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